



the freebird

VOLUME I

SEPTEMBER 2005

The Freebird is the newsletter of the Irish Fair of Minnesota. Its purpose is to keep us connected, provide updates, celebrate successes and share our stories, and to support the mission of the Irish Fair by promoting and cultivating Irish culture.

A FAIR TO REMEMBER!

2005 IRISH FAIR BREAKS RECORDS...AND THEN SOME!

This year the Irish Fair of Minnesota was *exuberantly* successful. The weather, headliners, publicity package and *foundation built on previous years* all helped to make this really a banner year. “We committed to authenticity---for instance, in the Food Court focusing on Irish offerings. It was a risk, but it paid off. We find the more Irish the Fair is, the more Fair-goers enjoy it” said Steve Cerkvenik, Executive Director of the Fair.



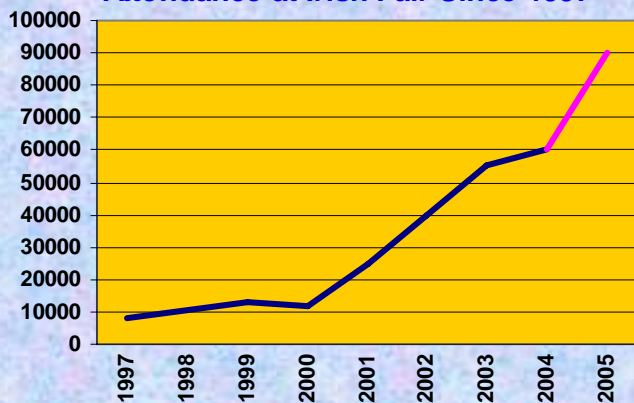
“The Artisan Area, the new Tea Room, the Summer

School, the Irish movie down on the Barge Stage—all the innovations were tremendously successful, and all our traditional activities experienced better- than-ever attendance, too.”

Yes, Flogging Molly played a role---anyone at the Fair Friday night knows how *hugely* popular they are—but numbers were also well up for the weekend itself.”

As a result, volunteers and vendors were stretched to the max, and lines were longer than usual. The Fair Board plans to build-in more “pop-up expandability” like the capacity to open more ticket/beer booths as needed in future.

Attendance at Irish Fair Since 1997



Still, there was a marvelous camaraderie among the folks on staff and the public, too, was very good-humored. In a recent Board meeting, organizers of each area of the Fair talked about how, for the folks working in their spot, Biffy's became a dreamt-of Shangri-La, feet expanded to the size of the QEII from lack of rest and victuals a mere dim memory---yet the great energy of the crowd, the excitement of bringing Irish culture to so many enthusiastic people and their fantastic co-workers kept them going strong.

The Fair Board plans to use the proceeds to not only build next year's grand event, but also to support Irish cultural and new immigrant events and efforts through the year.

AN GHAELGE

Courtesy of Gaeltacht Minnesota
<http://www.gaelminn.org/index.htm>

In honor of all our Fair Volunteers:

Is maith comhairle ach is fearr cabhair. "Advice is good, but help is better." Our volunteers distinguish themselves by going beyond the *talking* about what would be nice, and how things should be done to *making it happen*.

Aithnítear an duine ar an déirc. "A person is known by charity." -- that is, what matters is not talking about good works, but what a person actually gives to others, including some of the most valuable of gifts, time and cheerful hard work.

Dear Volunteers,

I wish on behalf of the Irish Fair Board to offer a very heart felt and enthusiastic thank you to all our volunteers. The Board is responsible for setting the direction of the Fair, the Irish community comes together to provide the substance and you the volunteers help pull it together and make it such an enjoyable and fun event for all of our community. We could not put on a free event without your selfless support and for that you deserve the gratitude of the community.

This year's Fair and your role in it was a tremendous success and will ultimately lead to a large financial contribution being made to support Irish cultural and new immigrant activities in Minnesota.

I hope you had the opportunity to get about and enjoy the activities and we look forward to your participation in the years ahead.

A Big Irish Thank You,
Kieran Folliard,
Chairman, Irish Fair Board.

UPCOMING EVENTS

IRISH SEAN-NÓS SINGER AINE MEENAGHAN TO PERFORM AT TRADITIONAL SINGERS CLUB EVENT

The Traditional Singers Club of the Twin Cities is the newest “jewel in the crown” of Irish cultural groups here.



The group only had their first event this past May, and now is bringing in a wonderful traditional Irish singer to the Twin Cities. In conjunction with The Center for Irish Music, they will present an afternoon of traditional Irish and Scottish song featuring Irish *sean-nós* (old style) singer

Aine Meenaghan on Sunday, September 11th in the Saint Paul Conservatory of Music recital hall. Meenaghan is a native of the Connemara Gaeltacht, an Irish Gaelic speaking area of western Ireland. Also performing will be Singers Club resident singers Erin Hart, Sherry Minnick, Brian Miller and others. Admission is \$10 at the door and the performance begins at 3 PM.

Aine Meenaghan was born and raised in the heart of the Connemara Gaeltacht and Irish was her first language. She began singing the traditional songs at an early age, learning from friends and relatives not only the repertoire but also the highly ornamented and expressive sean-nós way of singing. She took first prize for singing in the prestigious Fleadh Ceol An Iathair, the yearly music gathering and competition on the west coast of Ireland, at the age of eleven.

Aine has appeared at some of this country's biggest Irish and Celtic music festivals and has performed with a number of great musicians, including Martin Hayes, Randal Bays, and John Williams. Traditional Singers Club concerts follow a format designed to showcase featured artists while also promoting local participation in traditional singing.

Thus, September's event will include performances by “resident” club singers as well as an impromptu song or two from selected “floor” singers.

The St. Paul Conservatory of Music is located at the corner of Cedar and Exchange Street in downtown St. Paul. For more information call Brian Miller at 651-245-3719 or email brian@5milechase.com.

Website: www.5milechase.com/singersclub

NATALIE MACMASTER IN CONCERT



All the way from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada's most popular fiddler and her band will charm and amaze you with their Grammy nominated talent and vitality.

This is one you will not want to miss!!

SUNDAY, Sept. 25, 7:30 pm
Cambridge-Isanti Community Ed.
Tickets: \$20, 18, 16
Call 763-689-6189 or at the door

FAIR SHARE

Oi! Last chance on this here lonely, empty FAIRSHARE Column. Notion is, you send me great photos, anecdotes, drawings...poems (?) to share from your visit to the Irish Fair for the newsletter. Wanna? Do! siobhandugan@comcast.net

Until next month,
Best Regards from the
Irish Fair of
Minnesota